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CHARLES W. DUNN.

ARTIFICIAL DENTISTRY

AMONG

THE ETRUSCANS.



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Florence.

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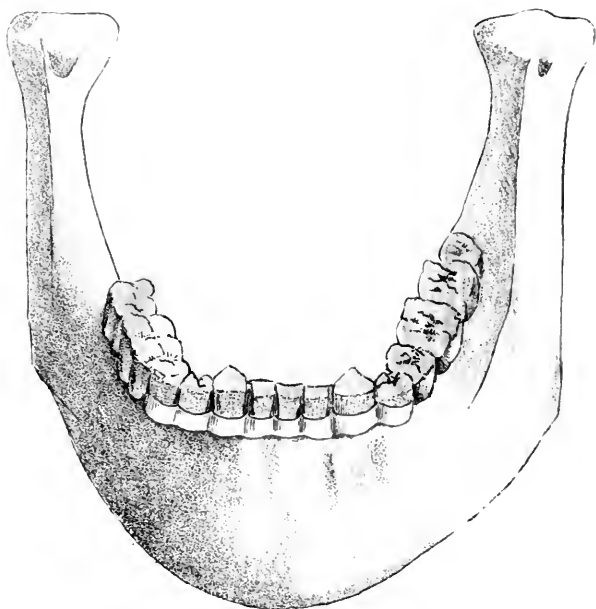
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Proofs that the art of Dentistry was practised by the Etruscans, have been found at different places, and that they had arrived at considerable skill, is very evident.



In the Etruscan Museum in Florence there are the crowns of eleven teeth, one canine and ten molars; they are completely hollowed out (the enamel only remaining, and this is perfect); not a particle of the dentine, excepting in two, has been left. They appear as if they had been prepared to crown broken teeth or

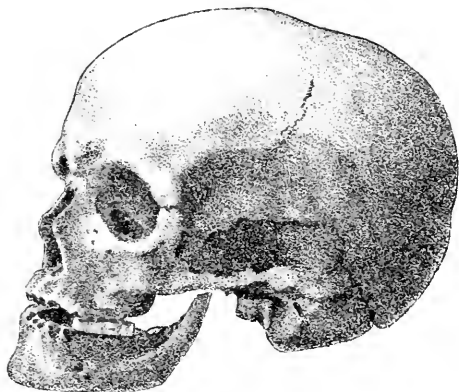
roots; they are greenish in colour as if they had been in contact with bronze.



In Florence, in the writer's possession, there exists an Etruscan skull, in the under jaw of which a gold band or ribbon has been interlaced in and about the incisors, embracing the canines and bicuspids. This probably was done for the purpose of supporting some of the teeth when they had been loosened.

At Marzabotto, near Bologna, in the collection of Count Pompeo Aria, there is a deciduous incisor tooth mounted exquisitely in gold: in this there is a loop, through which a cord was passed, so that it could be worn as an ornament.

An artificial tooth attached by gold wire was found in an Etruscan skull, at Marzabotto also. This skull was sent with other Etruscan objects to a foreign scientific society, but it was never returned to Count Aria.

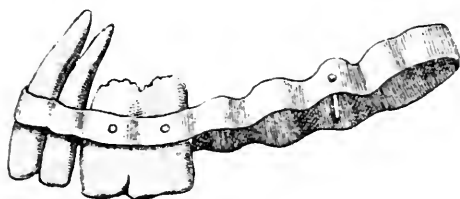


In the National Museum at Rome at the Villa Giulia, there is an Etruscan skull which has a small denture in gold. There is a space which probably held a false tooth; the rivet passing from side to side would indicate that the tooth was held there in place by it.



At Corneto, an Etruscan city some 40 miles from Rome, in the two Museums existing there, are four specimens of Etruscan dentures carrying artificial teeth: three for the upper jaw and one for the lower.

They all are made with bands, without any palate and resemble the « bridge work » of these days.



The principal one is an upper denture in gold, with eight apertures or rings. Five of these passed around teeth which were standing during the life of the person who wore them.

Two of these, the right upper canine and the right upper lateral, are still remaining in their rings or bands.

These bands extend from the right upper canine to the first left upper molar.

The two front upper incisors and the first upper left bicuspid were false teeth.

Owing to the incrustation of "tufo," earth, tartar, or probably of all combined about the two front upper incisors, and especially on their base or on that part which rested on the gum, it was very difficult to judge of what they were composed.

They, apparently, were carved out of one piece of material.

It may be stone, pottery, a fish's tooth, or a piece of enamel of a large animal's tooth.

They do not seem to be human teeth.

The form has been given somewhat roughly.

They were rivetted from front to back with two rivets into the gold ring around them.

The ring which had served to occupy the space of the left upper bicuspid had evidently supported a false tooth. This had disappeared, but the rivet of gold wire which passes from front to back shews evidently what purpose it had served.

The piece terminates with a ring which encircled the first left upper molar.

It is evident that one of the bicuspids had been lost during the life of the individual, for some time before the denture had been made. The space had closed up.

The denture is of very excellent gold; it is probably nearly pure in quality, rather thick, and made strongly; the workmanship is very good, and the plate has been carefully and nicely finished; no file marks are apparent: all is smooth and artistically done.

The rings or bands are joined by solder, a solder so good that its colour, even after it has been under ground for so many centuries, probably twenty five or thirty, is equal to that of the other parts of the plate.—Even with a good lens it is impossible to detect any difference of colour, or any flaw of any description.

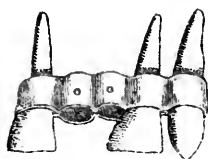


In the Stanza Ottava, in the same Museum at Corneto, there is another gold denture for the under jaw. It was made to embrace five teeth: two of these were the false teeth, one of them an incisor; a human tooth is still in position. The other is missing. The gold rivets remain.

The tooth fixed with a rivet has its root filed quite short.

There are four divisions and the soldering is here also exceedingly good.

The gold bands are thick and strong and appear to be almost pure.



In the Palazzo Bruschi, also at Corneto, there are two other dentures, one to hold two upper front false teeth with rings around three teeth, which served to hold and sustain them in the mouth. These three teeth are still inside the band or rings which held them during life.



The other small denture has three teeth clasped and one empty space where the false tooth was attached.

It is made in gold bands with rivets of gold; the union of the different rings had been brought about by the same admirable soldering.

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